

Jon Thomas Rowland

ARREST!

He called it advocacy.

Johnny knew: It was gangsterism, thuggery....

CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY!

At the very least, meddling in Citizen Hearse's PRIVATE AFFAIRS.

Capitol offense, contrary to the common good, which, except for such distractions, was always uppermost on Hearse-Ferrari's mind.

The one attenuating circumstance, everyone who became Bruce's client, got evicted two weeks later. He was better than the Tribunal.

Bruce complained, to anyone who'd listen. He was being persecuted, for advocacy (gangsterism, thuggery). Johnny knew. It was for bad habits. Street drugs, on top of all that clozapine. On Dadania Day he wanted to celebrate like every other red-blooded Dadanian boy....

Just because he had a disability, couldn't he disturb his neighbors, shake grease and cigarette-stained copies of the Universal Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms under everyone's nose, entertain the crooks and gangsters Hearse-Ferrari most wanted out, refer darkly to his Viking Blood and consequences whenever within hearing of anyone who'd ever remotely criticized his drunken disorderliness?

So like Bruce, Elmo simpered. Never wrong.

All he needed to do was say, I'm sorry (Maitre!), it won't happen again (Excellency!).

Only Johnny knew, it was already TOO LATE.

Elmo worried. The said if he didn't join THE PARTY he'd be PURGED. Hearse-Ferrari wanted to liquidate his old clients. They didn't PAY (enough) any more.

He didn't want CLIENTS. He wanted CLIENTELE! It was more than semantics. It was MONEY!

So what if it WAS? Johnny wondered. Siding with losers, would only make it faster.

Elmo still worried. He had a list of Butch's outrages. How he BORROWED his laptop and REFUSED to give it back. Instead, he forced him to take his desktop. Elmo carried it into his apartment, plugged it in, and pressed ON. The fan wheezed, but the machine didn't boot up. It obviously didn't work. It stank! Stale piss, ciggies, and marijuana. He immediately carried it all the way back to Butch's apartment on the Beastly side of the building, and tapped gently on his door, so as not to arouse his well-known anti-social tendencies. Eventually Butch opened it a crack, so as not to release his cats, releasing instead the stench of stale piss, ciggies, and marijuana. It worked when I gave it to you, he lied. Smashing the door in his face.

Elmo never got his laptop back, or even a working desktop, but Butch came to his door regularly. For money. He'd knock softly, but if he suspected Elmo was home and not answering, he'd start whispering at him, through the keyhole.

Pssst! Elmo! I know you're home. I saw you enter, from the BOOZE CAN. I'm not going to beat you up, I just want to TALK to you.

He knew what about. Always the same thing....

It was curious, how he couldn't stand even a census-worker showing up at his door, but didn't mind showing up at anyone else's door, himself, whenever he pleased, for MONEY, which he wouldn't go till he obtained.